

Elon University Statement Regarding Faculty Forward Action

Elon University did not receive advance notice of an event held today on campus organized by the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), which has been working on many college campuses to form faculty unions. This national project is known as “Faculty Forward” and representatives of the union have been contacting some Elon faculty to gain their support for a union here. Some Elon faculty have reported feeling uncomfortable when approached by these outside organizers on campus and at their homes and have shared their concerns with the Provost’s office.

Elon has taken no actions to restrict the SEIU organizing effort or retaliate against individuals and will comply with all federal and state labor laws. We believe any consideration of a union at Elon should be conducted with accurate information and a full appreciation of the outstanding benefits and support the university provides to faculty of all ranks and contract terms. Elon is distinguished from many other universities by practices, policies and culture that involve all faculty fully in the life of the community. We believe that investments in faculty are crucial to ensuring student success and creating a vibrant academic community.

Only 27 percent of Elon faculty members are part-time, compared with a national average of 49 percent. This fall only 16 percent of Elon’s undergraduate courses are being taught by part-time faculty. Elon’s pay and benefits package for adjunct faculty members is highly competitive and in line with peer institutions. Elon appreciates the contributions adjunct faculty make to the university and students and has rewarded that service in many ways, including a representative on Elon’s Academic Council.

Seventy-two percent of Elon faculty are either tenured or on a tenure track, up from 52 percent in 1995. This is counter to a long-term national trend in the reduction of tenure/tenure track faculty. According to the American Association of University Professors, the national tenure/tenure track percentage fell from 34 percent in 1995 to 30 percent in 2015.

Equally important has been Elon’s record of increasing support and professional development resources for faculty, raising faculty pay to be competitive with other top-ranked private universities, providing outstanding health insurance and retirement benefits, dramatically increasing sabbatical opportunities, lowering the student-to-faculty ratio, decreasing average class sizes and increasing support for faculty-student research projects.

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